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**U.S. ARMY MILITARY DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON**  
**JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS-NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**  
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**MAR 14 2016**

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Policy Letter – Soldier For Life -Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) and Credentialing and Career Skills Program (CSP) – Memorandum #7

1. REFERENCES.

- a. Memorandum, Secretary of the Army, subject: Army Directive 2014-18 (Army Career and Alumni Program).
- b. Policy Memorandum 210-22, IMCOM, subject: Installation Access and Services to Non-profit Non-Federal Entities (NFE).
- c. Army Directive 2015-12 (Implementation Guidance for Credentialing Program and Career Skills Program).
- d. Title 10, United States Code, sections 1142-44.
- e. Veterans Opportunity for Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act, Pub. L. No. 112-56, sections 201-256, 125 Stat 711-733.
- f. Department of Defense - Veterans Affairs Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force Implementation Plan, Appendix A.
- g. Directive - Type Memorandum (DTM) 12 - 007, Under Secretary of Defense, (Personnel and Readiness), subject: Implementation of Mandatory Transition Assistance Program Participation for Eligible Service Members).
- h. Memorandum, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, subject: Transition Assistance Program
- i. Memorandum, Secretary of the Army, subject: Army Transition Policy.
- j. Execution Order 051-12, HQDA, G3 DAMO AOC (MC), subject: ISO Army Transition.
- k. OPORD 15-094, IMCOM, subject: Implementation Guidance for New and Existing Career Skills Programs (CSP).

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## 2. BACKGROUND.

a. The Army is committed to ensuring lifelong success for our Soldiers and their Families by connecting them with opportunities for career skills and employment, post military service. The SFL-TAP helps transitioning Soldiers to make informed decisions through benefits and employment assistance counseling by delivering a host of services. That preparation consists of meeting the 12 Career Readiness Standards through the SFL-TAP process and also allowing Soldiers to prepare themselves by learning career skills that support their transition plan.

b. All transitioning Soldiers deserve our support and commitment throughout the Transition Soldier Life Cycle (SLC) by allowing appropriate time and access to the resources needed to successfully prepare them for civilian life. Currently, most (70%) transitioning Soldiers fail to arrive at SFL-TAP IAW Army Directive 2014-18, Career Readiness Standards. Moreover, these Soldiers arrive only 6-8 months before separation and are in jeopardy of not receiving valuable education and employment opportunities. **Leaders must set the conditions which enable Soldiers to begin the process earlier (12-18 months).**

3. PURPOSE. To provide additional implementation guidance to leaders on the SFL-TAP and CSP programs. It is not intended to replace existing guidance already prescribed by law, regulation or other policies and enhance current processes based on best practices and lessons learned across the Army.

4. APPLICABILITY. These procedures are applicable to all Soldiers and Family members who utilize SFL-TAP services located at Fort Belvoir, VA; Fort George G Meade, MD; and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, VA.

5. POLICY. This policy implements the mandates and requirements of the VOW (Veterans Opportunity to Work) to Hire Heroes Act, DoD-U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Employment initiative, and Army Directive (Implementation Guidance for Credentialing and Career Skills Program) as it relates to the SFL-TAP in coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the VA.

## 6. PROCEDURES.

a. SFL-TAP. SFL-TAP is a commander's program. Commanders will ensure all transitioning Soldiers fully participate and meet all transition requirements and timelines IAW prescribed law, directives, policies, and regulations. Soldiers will execute transition plans in conjunction with unit training and mission requirements. Soldiers will attend scheduled transition appointments approved by the commander.

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b. Soldiers must complete pre-separation counseling (3-hour training) and document it on DD Forms 2648, Preseparation Counseling Checklist and 2648-1, TAP Checklist NLT 12-18 months prior to separation (24 months if retiring).

c. Each BDE/BN level or equivalent unit, separate and tenant organizations, receiving SFL-TAP services within USAMDW, will appoint a Transition POC in writing and provide a copy to their servicing SFL-TAP office. Transition POCs will work with their local SFL-TAP office and update the command on VOW Act and Career Readiness Standards compliance data.

d. Hiring/recruiting events will be utilized to the greatest extent possible. Companies granted access to the installation during these types of events will be actively recruiting/hiring for open positions. The intent is to provide Soldiers and Family members with access to meaningful hiring/recruiting events where employers are actively recruiting/interviewing potential jobseekers for employment. By doing so, I am confident we will increase opportunities for employment and make better use of Soldier/Unit time and installation resources.

e. Each BDE/BN level or equivalent, separate unit and tenant organization, receiving SFL-TAP services within USAMDW will implement a SFL-TAP policy within their command/organization.

f. Garrison commanders will develop a plan to invite senior leadership (Commander or Senior NCO) to personally open initial Transition GPS classes. Remarks are intended to thank Soldiers for their service and emphasize the importance of transition preparation. I personally look forward to hearing any comments or feedback to improve our processes and may serve as either a best practices or lessons learned.

g. IAW IMCOM Policy Memorandum 210-22, I delegate authority for garrison commanders to provide a uniform approach to installation access for Nonprofit NFEs for purposes of providing services to transitioning Soldiers and Families.

7. Credentialing Programs. The Army Credentialing Program and CSP are elements of the Military Life Cycle model that encourages Soldiers to capitalize on training and development opportunities throughout their military careers so that they grow and develop as Soldiers fully capable of serving our Nation-both in uniform and as civilians beyond their military service.

a. Individuals may pursue professional credentialing as self-directed post-secondary school activities or be part of military/industry partnership or agreement coordinated by Army training institutions.

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b. Transitioning servicemembers should contact their installation Education Service Office (ESO) or Transition Service Manager (TSM) and SFL-TAP counselors to discuss credentialing opportunities.

8. Career Skills Programs. Career Skills Programs such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, job shadowing, and internships offer employments skills training opportunities to Soldiers preparing to transition from the military to civilian employment.

a. Commanders will provide reasonable opportunity for eligible and authorized Soldiers to participate in approved Career Skills Programs, as applicable and defined in this policy, Army Directive 2015-12, and mission requirements.

b. Soldiers must be enrolled into SFL-TAP prior to starting an approved CSP. Approval authority is the transitioning Soldier's battalion/ squadron commander or equivalent. This authority may not be delegated. Approval authority will establish accountability procedures and may terminate a Soldier's participation in a CSP based on mission requirements.

c. Transitioning servicemembers from other Military Services are not restricted from participating in an Army CSP. Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate all eligible personnel from other Military Services provided that the Army does not incur additional costs.

d. A complete list of eligibility criteria is located in Army Directive 2015-12.

9. This policy will remain in effect until changed or formally rescinded.

10. PROPONENT. The point of contact for this memorandum is the USAMDW J/G1 Sergeant Major at 202-685-0490, DSN 325-0490.

2 Encls

1. SFL-TAP Timeline
2. Guide to Getting Started Early

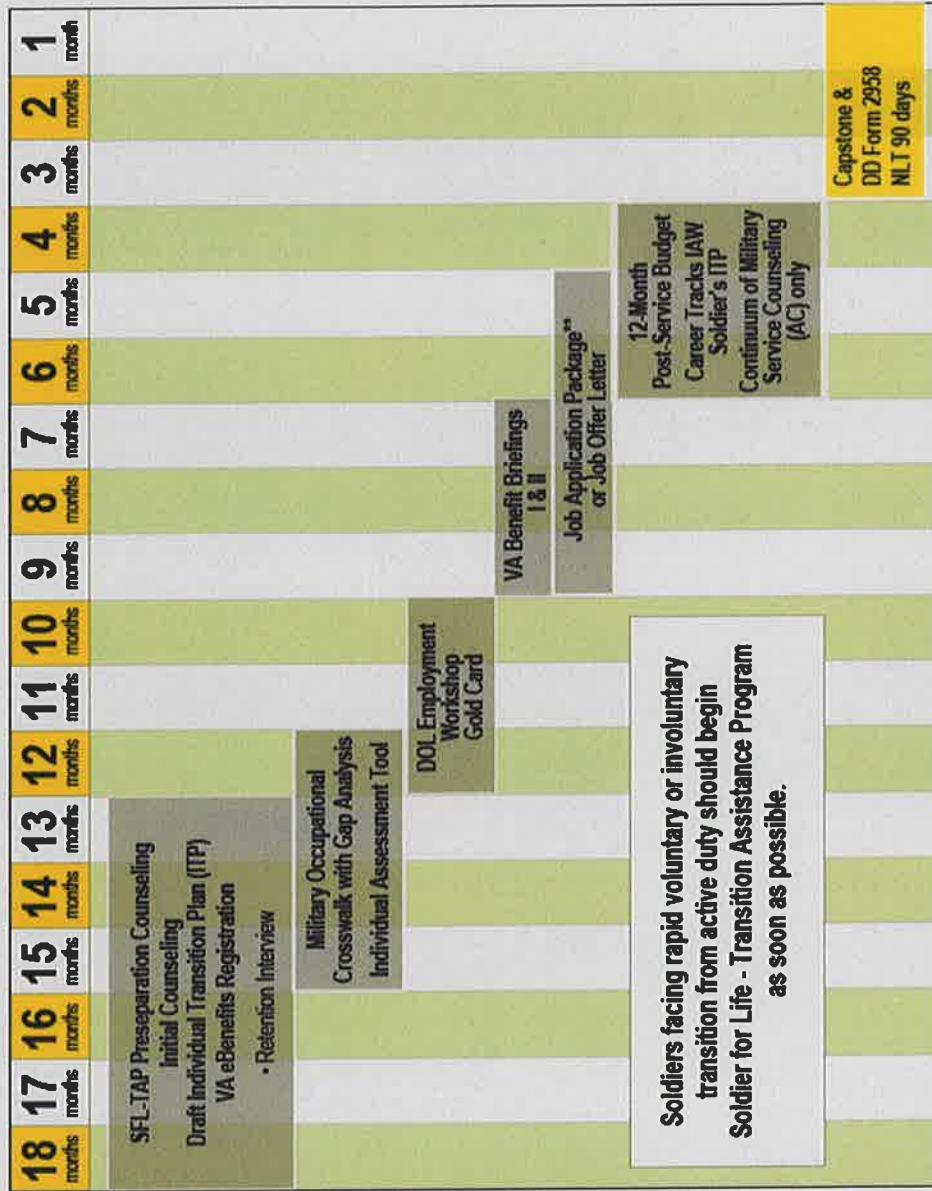


BRADLEY A. BECKER  
MG, US Army  
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:

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# Army Distributed Transition Timeline\*



\* Recommended transition timeline to receive maximum benefit from program

\*\* Job Application Package consists of a resume of choice, references, and two submitted job applications.

All transition services represented here can be accessed face-to-face at your local ACAP Center, through ACAP Virtual Center ([www.acap.army.mil](http://www.acap.army.mil)) or at 800.325.4715.

Acronyms: Dept of Labor (DOL), Dept of Veterans Affairs (VA), Individual Transition Plan (ITP)

## **Getting Started Early**

Each commander, sergeant major and first sergeant is responsible for ensuring that Soldiers initiate SFL-TAP services early on in the transition process. Recognizing that the effectiveness of services is directly linked to the time Soldiers spend preparing for their transition from active duty, Soldiers should begin the transition process up to two years (for retirees) or no later than one year (for non-retiring transitioners) prior to transition from active duty. From a leader's point of view, early is better than late. Soldiers who begin their SFL-TAP services early in their transition are better able to complete SFL-TAP activities around unit duty requirements. More importantly, if the Army is to realize the benefits of reduced unemployment compensation costs, enhanced active duty retention, enhanced enlistment in the National Guard and Reserve and enhanced image of the Army as a great place to start, Soldiers must have time to receive substantive transition and employment assistance services. SFL-TAP Centers maintain statistics on unit compliance with Army, DOD policies and congressional mandates regarding timely involvement in transition and job assistance services. Your chain of command will typically have access to this data and your unit's compliance rate will be a matter of record.

## **Notification**

The chain of command should ensure that transitioning Soldiers receive notification correspondence and take timely action to arrange for their first service. Remember, from a leader's point of view, early is better than late. In addition to direct notification, Soldiers may be informed of the need to access SFL-TAP services through pre-retirement briefings, ETS briefings and on-post marketing initiatives.

## **Registering for Services**

Notified Soldiers can register for their first SFL-TAP service online, in person or pre-register by phone. Once registered, they can schedule services and print an appointment slip. Soldiers can choose to receive services in the SFL-TAP Center or online. Face to face service at the SFL-TAP center is always the preferred method. Either way, they will be advised of what they need to do next. You are always welcome to contact the SFL-TAP Center to confirm a Soldier's first appointment or to confirm that the Soldier actually reported to the SFL-TAP Center as scheduled or completed pre-separation counseling online.

## **First Visit**

The first step in the SFL-TAP process is a two-hour pre-separation counseling session, most often presented as an automated presentation delivered by the SFL-TAP On-Line website or at the SFL-TAP Center. The contents of the counseling are defined by DOD and Army policy and provide Soldiers valuable information on transition benefits and programs designed to assist their smooth transition from active duty. Soldiers complete a DD Form 2648 or 2648-1 to acknowledge receipt of this counseling and indicate their desire for additional information and services. The date of this briefing is recorded in the automated SFL-TAP system and, along with the Soldiers ETS date, is the basis for all statistical reports on unit compliance with Army, DOD policies and congressional mandates. At the conclusion of the briefing, Soldiers will be provided information on other service providers and given the opportunity to schedule follow-on SFL-TAP services. When Soldiers do schedule a follow-on activity, they can print an appointment slip. As always, unit commanders and leaders can always verify an appointment by calling the SFL-TAP Center.

## **Workshops**

The next step in the SFL-TAP process is attendance at a Department of Labor Employment Workshop (DOLEW). DOLEW is conducted by DOL facilitators. The workshop is three days in length and provides attendees the knowledge, information and skills they need to achieve their post-transition occupational goals. The Veterans Administration provides two briefings to ensure Soldiers are made aware of all the benefits offered to veterans of the Armed Services, to include those disabled as a result of their service. Additional Workshops assist Soldiers compare their current salary, benefits and opportunities with those they might be able to attain in the Private Sector, as well as identify gaps in their military skills that may assist with civilian employment. A schedule of your installation's workshops can be found on SFL-TAP On-Line.

## **Additional Services**

No one ever found a job just by attending a class. The real work of preparing for transition success begins where the workshop ends. Soldiers, even those going to school after separation, will need to begin the process of setting a career objective. Objective setting requires a careful assessment of occupations, the job market and the Soldier's own skills, aptitudes, experience, education and training. Once the Soldier has set an objective, the tough task of achieving that objective begins. Typically, job seekers must create a resume, network, identify job opportunities, apply for jobs, prepare for interviews and prepare to negotiate salary and benefits. These are difficult tasks and few Soldiers have ever performed them prior to their entry on active duty. SFL-TAP staff members are qualified professionals who have the training and resources to help Soldiers perform these critical tasks. Counselors can be contacted through SFL-TAP On-Line or counseling sessions can be scheduled for individual attention. Soldiers can also go to SFL-TAP On-Line or schedule time in the SFL-TAP Center to use the automated job assistance training program, JATA, as a means of supplementing workshop instruction as well as career exploration tools, resume writers and Internet job search resources. Generally, Soldiers can print an appointment slip and commanders and leaders can always contact the SFL-TAP Center to verify an appointment or attendance at an appointment.

## **Special Events**

Your SFL-TAP Center may schedule special events to enrich SFL-TAP services. Hiring fairs may be held to help transitioners meet and interview with hiring employers. Local employers may be invited into the SFL-TAP Center to help Soldiers understand the local job market and better appreciate what employers are looking for in successful job applicants. The SFL-TAP Center also might hold short classes for those who want to learn more about a specific job search topic such as resume writing or interviewing. A schedule of these special events can be found on SFL-TAP On-Line.